

Common Core State Standards

On July 7, 2010, with a unanimous vote, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted new national academic standards, known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics that will establish what Connecticut's (CT) public school students should know and be able to do as they progress through Grades K–12.

The CCSS were designed to consist of fewer, clearer and higher-level standards; to be aligned with college and work expectations; to include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills; to build upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards; to be internationally benchmarked so that all students will be prepared to succeed in our global economy; and to be based on evidence and research.

The English language arts standards require that students systematically develop literacy skills and understandings through reading, writing, speaking and listening. For Grades 6-12, there is also a set of standards for English language arts in history/social studies, science and technical subjects. The mathematics standards are designed to focus on developing students' understanding of mathematical concepts and acquisition of fundamental reasoning habits, in addition to fluency skills.

The newly adopted national standards will provide guidance to local curriculum committees as they develop grade-by-grade and course-level expectations and engage in secondary school reform.

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About the Common Core State Standards:

1. Q: [What is the primary goal of the CCSS?](#)
A: The CCSS were developed to prepare students to become college and career ready by the end of Grade 12, as well as create common expectations from state to state.
2. Q: [What does it mean to be college and career ready?](#)
A: In a global economy, students must be prepared to compete with students in the next state and students from around the world. These CCSS set high expectations for students regarding the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and careers.

3. Q: Will the CCSS be updated?

A: Yes. There will be an ongoing state-led development process that can support continuous improvement of the CCSS.

4. Q: The term “rigor” is used in the CCSS document. What does “rigor” mean?

A: Rigor, as it relates to the CCSS, refers to a level of difficulty and the ways in which students apply their knowledge through higher-order skills. For example, in the area of writing, a first grader may write about his/her family using simple sentences with little detail. As students progress through the grade levels, they are asked to write in various modes using supporting details and complex sentences demonstrating their advanced knowledge.

Implications for Connecticut School Districts:

5. Q: How does the lack of Race to the Top funding impact the implementation of CCSS?

A: The CSDE work on implementation of the CCSS will move forward without Race to the Top funding.

6. Q: How does the adoption of the CCSS impact current district curriculum development and documents?

A: Districts are at various stages of curriculum development, review and revision. Curricula based on the current CT state standards are still valuable. Districts should continue to develop, review and revise their curriculum. The CCSS not addressed in their curriculum must be integrated.

7. Q: Are the CCSS replacing the CT English language arts and mathematics standards?

A: Yes. The CCSS were adopted by the State Board of Education on July 7, 2010. Crosswalk documents are being developed to assist districts in understanding the correlations between the CCSS and CT standards. Crosswalk documents will be available by September 17, 2010.

8. Q: Given that the CCSS were designed for Grades K-12, what does this mean for curriculum revisions and development at the prekindergarten level?

A: Some CT prekindergarten standards in the English language arts and mathematics Grade-Level Expectations documents align with the kindergarten CCSS. When making curricular decisions for preschool, districts may refer to the kindergarten CCSS and crosswalk documents (crosswalk documents available by September 17, 2010), as well as Connecticut’s Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks.

Additional guidance regarding prekindergarten standards will be forthcoming. The CSDE views preschool as an integral component of a comprehensive education system and is working to articulate a full range of learning expectations across the continuum, PreK-12.

9. Q: How does the CCSS impact classroom teachers?

A: Districts will use the CCSS to guide their revision and development of their English language arts and mathematics curricula. Classroom teachers should continue to use their district's curriculum documents and supporting materials, and stay apprised of curricula alignment revisions.

10. Q: How will the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) assist districts with the transition process to the CCSS?

A: The CSDE will assist districts by providing technical assistance through regional information sessions, creating standards crosswalk documents, maintaining a dedicated CCSS page on the CSDE Web site and providing timely assessment development updates.

English Language Arts:

11. Q: How are the CCSS for English language arts organized?

A: The CCSS comprise three main sections: a comprehensive K-5 section and two content area-specific sections for Grades 6-12, one for English language arts and one for history/social studies, science and technical subjects. Each section is divided into strands and each strand is headed by a strand-specific set of College and Career Readiness anchor standards that is identical across all grades and content areas.

12. Q: In addition to the K-12 English language arts section for reading, writing, speaking, listening and language, the CCSS define literacy expectations for Grades 6-12 in history/social studies, science and technical subjects. Who is responsible for this portion of the CCSS?

A: In support of an interdisciplinary approach to literacy development, grade specific English language arts standards need to be included in district level content area curricula revisions and development.

13. Q: The CCSS provide text exemplars illustrating the complexity, quality and range of reading appropriate for various grade levels. Are districts required to purchase the texts listed?

A: No. The lists are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the CCSS. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality and range for their students.

Mathematics:

14. Q: How are the CCSS for mathematics organized?

A: The CCSS include standards for both mathematical practice and content. The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe processes and proficiencies that K-12 mathematics educators should help their students to develop. The K-8 content standards are organized by grade level and the 9-12 content standards are organized by conceptual categories.

15. Q: Why do the CCSS look different at the high school level?

A: Conceptual categories portray a coherent view of high school mathematics that builds upon K-8 content standards. Content from each category may cross a number of traditional mathematics courses. Similar to the Core and Extended Standards in the CT 9-12 Mathematics Framework that include mathematics all students should learn, as well as topics for advanced study, the CCSS indicate advanced topics with the (+) symbol.

16. Q: How will the implementation of the CCSS affect instruction in the mathematics classroom?

A: The CCSS were written to address the nationwide problem of mathematics curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep.” Curriculum based on the CCSS may shift the emphasis of instruction to avoid the repetition of the same topic at multiple grade levels.

State Assessments:

17. Q: How do the CMT and CAPT align with the CCSS?

A: The CMT and CAPT assess content outlined in the CT Mathematics and English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks. Crosswalk documents will include correlations between the CCSS and CT assessments.

18. Q: Will the CMT and CAPT change?

A: The Fourth Generation CMT and Third Generation CAPT will remain the same through 2014.

English Language Learners:

19. Q: Do the CCSS replace the Connecticut English Language Learner (CT ELL) Framework?

A: No. The CCSS do not replace the CT ELL Framework. The CT ELL Framework (CSDE: Bilingual/English as a Second Language Education) is a supporting document for use by all educators who are working with English language learners regardless of the type of programming, [Bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL)] including instruction in the general education setting. The document assists teachers in supporting students' development of academic and social language. Teachers should continue using the CT ELL Framework along with English language arts and mathematics curricula (developed by districts using the CCSS). ESL and Bilingual teachers should use the CT ELL framework as a foundation for instruction, while supporting content knowledge and the general education curriculum.

Watch for new FAQs about special education.

For additional information, visit the CSDE CCCS Web site at [SDE: Common Core State Standards](#) or contact Joanne White at joanne.white@ct.gov.